

## Problem Statement

The purpose of this study is to determine current attitudes and knowledge of children towards stranger awareness. It is aimed towards children in elementary and middle school grades. The study will also determine how these students are impacted after receiving stranger safety awareness interventions.

The participants are children of elementary and middle school age. Parents/guardians will also have an active role in participation. The setting for the research is a large school district on Long Island. The participants will be taught a specific educational curriculum that focuses on stranger awareness, specifically safety and self-advocacy. The information will be conveyed through the use of videos and live puppet shows. There will be a survey administered prior to the safety awareness intervention, in order to pinpoint current understandings toward child safety. After the intervention is complete, participants will take the same survey, to see if a change has occurred.

Children abduction is a serious problem; therefore, it is essential that researchers evaluate the efficacy of commercially available abduction-prevention programs. A multiple baseline design across participants (ages 6 to 8 years) was used to evaluate the effects of a training program, The Safe Side. Experimenters assessed safety responses in situ in two different situations (knock on the door and interaction by a stranger in public). Results revealed that participants did not demonstrate the safety skills following Safe Side training. All participants subsequently received in situ training (IST) implemented by the parent. Additional assessments and IST were conducted until each participant performed the skills to criterion. All participants demonstrated criterion performance following IST and maintained the skills over time.

Beck, K. V., & Milterberger, R. G. (2009). Evaluation of a Commercially Available Program and in Situ Training by Parents to Teach Abduction-Prevention Skills to Children. *Journal Of Applied Behavior Analysis*, 42(4), 761-772.

Abduction of children by strangers often leads to serious consequences. Young children with and without disabilities are seen as likely targets of abduction. As a result, a number of studies have evaluated procedures for teaching young children to resist the bids by strangers to abduct them. The components of the effective programs include (a) verbal rehearsal, (b) modeling, (c) role playing or simulation, (d) feedback, and (e) use of multiple exemplars of lures and strangers. This project evaluated the effects of two strategies designed to promote maintenance of the targeted skills and developed a training manual for preschool teachers on how to teach children to avoid abduction and how to use the maintenance-promoting strategies.

Wolery, M., & Allegheny-Singer Research Inst., P.A. (1993). Teaching Preschoolers to Avoid Abduction by Strangers: Evaluation of Maintenance Strategies. Final Report.

National estimates suggest that more than 100,000 children in the U.S. experience an attempted abduction by a non-family member each year. Most of these incidents befall young children—boys and girls ages four to eleven—and, despite not being completed, cause both children and their parents significant alarm. The authors examined cases of attempted non-family abductions (ANFAs), identified in a national telephone survey of 10,367 households, to determine child and family characteristics that may serve as risk factors for such incidents. The prevalence and risk-marker findings from this study reinforce the need to continue teaching “stranger-danger” and suggest that children living in stressful or unstable family environments may be in particular need of such prevention efforts.

Finkelhor, D., & And, O. (1995). Attempted Non-Family Abductions. *Child Welfare*, 74(5), 941-955.